

Town of Montville Town Council
Special Meeting Minutes of Monday, March 14, 2011
6:30 p.m. – Town Council Chambers – Town Hall

1. Call to Order

Vice Chairperson Hillman called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence in honor and support of our troops.

3. Roll Call

Present were Councilors Beetham, Buebendorf, Caron, Hillman, Jacobson (6:34 p.m.), McFee and Murphy. Also present was Mayor Jaskiewicz and Town Attorney Bruce Chudwick

4. Remarks from the public regarding items on the agenda

Acting Chairperson Hillman asked three times if anyone from the public would like to come forward to address the Council regarding items on the agenda.

5. To consider and act on a motion to hear a presentation from Vision Appraisal regarding the Towns revaluation.

Motion made by Councilor Buebendorf, seconded by Councilor Beetham. Discussion; none, voice vote, 7-0, all in favor, motion carried. Mr. David Arnold from the company of Vision Appraisal was present to give a presentation regarding the process of revaluation, the length of time the revaluation will take and to answer questions from the Council regarding the process. He distributed copies of a power point presentation to the Council to follow as he gave his presentation. (see attached Schedule A) He explained all Cities and Towns in the State of Connecticut are mandated by the State to do a revaluation every ten years with an update every five years. Five years ago the town conducted an update based on the information that was on record and this time around a full inspection of homes will be conducted. The team will measure the homes and inspect the interior of the homes to get the most accurate information as possible. A team of inspectors is currently going house to house gathering information. The team will be appraising the homes at one hundred percent and assess the properties at seventy percent of the fair market value. Some of the benefits for a revaluation is that property values become disproportionate over the years, commercial and residential properties tend to shift in value, some go up faster than others, some go down faster than others, neighborhoods become declining neighborhoods over time and the State requires that every property be at seventy percent of value. During inspections the team finds new construction with and without building permits for things like finishing basements and making improvements to the homes. His company is looking at the sales over the past two years to determine what the property values are and have developed computerized models that will accurately reflect those values and apply an assessment properly. The data collectors in the field are requesting an interior inspection of each home, but if someone does not choose to let them in there is nothing the inspectors can do to obtain access to the home. If they do not get access to the home they do their best to measure the outside of the home and gather as much information as the homeowner will allow. Mr. Beetham discussed the difference between the peak of the market and today and how the difference will effect the revaluation. Mr. Arnold explained the date of value is October 1, 2011 and the values will reflect his date. He is looking at sales and is also looking into the increases and decreases in value and trend the values forward and backward based on the market. In the past couple years the trend has been downward, and the values will be reflected as of October 2, 2011. The latest sales information is the most important. Councilor McFee inquired if the use of foreclosure will be implemented into the values or sales figures. Mr. Arnold stated his company does not consider foreclosures to determine values because foreclosures are typically not arms length sales and do not count them in the analysis because they are not arms length but do consider

the effect they have on other properties. He acknowledges they do affect the other properties but do not include them in the analysis. There are three approaches to value; the cost approach and what it costs to build a house, the cost manuals that are nationally published and local costs to build a house added to the land value; this competes with the sales comparison approach, what people are actually paying for houses right now, and the income approach to value on the commercial and apartment buildings. The income approach will include sending out income and expense statements with a return date of June, 2011. They are looking at the rental portion of the land and how much the office space is leasing for and how much apartments are renting for and looking as an investor what someone would capitalize on that income as a third approach to value. Over the next few months the physical inspections will wrap up and sales will be reviewed again in the field by an appraiser and an analysis will be done of those sales and in October the values should be finalized at seventy percent and notification will go out to all taxpayers and informal hearing will be held at that time. Anyone who wishes to speak with him regarding the understanding of how the company came to the value of the home will be heard at that time. If someone is not satisfied with the values of their property the homeowner does have the right to appeal to the Board of Assessment Appeals with hearing scheduled for March of 2012. All of the data collected will be posted on the internet so the homeowners can see the values posted and review the data to determine if it is correct. Everyone has access to the site and the site provides information regarding values throughout the town. Mr. Arnold answered questions from the Council regarding the revaluation. Councilor Buebendorf inquired regarding the website and who is responsible for maintaining the website. She has concerns regarding the Vision Appraisal employees visiting homes and inquired regarding what type of notification is given to homeowners in advance of their visit. Mr. Arnold stated the visits are cold calls because it is difficult to notify people ahead of time because he has no idea how long each call will take. The employees carry identification and there are signs on the vehicles the employees drive to the residents. The employees carry a signed letter from the Assessor. The police have the license plate numbers and the names of the employees if anyone has concerns or needs verification. Councilor Buebendorf stated the town needs to make an effort to let the citizens of the town know people will be coming out to their houses for inspections. She expressed concern regarding the company having no authority to enter into homes without the consent of the homeowners. Mr. Arnold stated the residents are not legally obliged to let Vision Appraisal into their homes but the employees explain the advantages to letting them in to get an accurate appraisal of the home. They can not force their way into the home and will estimate the property value the best they can without physical inspection if the homeowner refuses access. Councilor Beetham discussed the timetable for the assessments. Councilor McFee inquired regarding the reduction in the value of homes based on the peak of the market in 2006 compared to now. Mr. Arnold stated the average reduction in the value of homes was a five to six percent decline from the 2005 values. He indicated almost consistently across the board in Connecticut there was a three to seven percent decline in assessments. The 2006-2007 increase values were very high and the decline over the past couple of years was an offset of those increases. Councilor Beetham discussed the replacement costs for homes. Mr. Arnold discussed the calculations and formulas used to determine an assessed value of a home. Councilor Murphy discussed assessments and hopes this year the company will not make it more difficult for the homeowners than it has to be. Councilor Hillman inquired regarding the maintenance of the Vision Appraisal website and who updates the system when improvements are made. Mr. Arnold stated the database is updated each month with information provided to the Assessor.

6. Remarks from the Councilors

Councilor McFee expressed concern and disbelief that there is only a five percent decline in the assessments over the past five years.

7. Remarks from the Public

Acting Chairperson Hillman asked three times if anyone from the public would like to come forward to address the Council.

8. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor McFee, seconded by Councilor Beetham to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. Discussion, none, voice vote, 7-0, all in favor, motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Audrey Ulmer, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville